

## Council 4 AFSCME Testimony – Appropriations Committee, February 18, 2010

### Support for Legislative Commissions

Council 4 AFSCME urges you to restore the five legislative commissions to the state budget: African American, Latino, Aging, Children's and Women. These commissions share a quest for economic justice. They are too important to give up. And, in the time of economic disaster that we're going through they are needed more than ever. Total cost for these commissions is \$4 million. I know that's a lot of money. In a \$19 billion budget, it's such an infinitesimal amount of money that hopefully it is possible to keep them.

The reason I bring this up is there's hard data saying that we need these commissions. Connecticut Voices for Children reports that right now average workers in Connecticut make \$19.95 per hour versus \$14.44 per hour for Black males versus \$12.19 per hour for Latino males. The average wage for a male in Connecticut is \$20.09 an hour. The average wage for a woman is \$16.49. That's hard data from the U.S. census. So unless we buy into the theory that folks of color and women are inferior, we know that the economic affects of discrimination have not been fully remedied yet. These commissions go far towards remedying economic injustice. So I urge you to restore them.

And, the other thing I want to say -- I know I'm not before the finance committee, but I just want to urge you folks -- and we know that it is a tough task, to please raise the necessary taxes to allow for these commissions and other services vital to civilization to survive. I know our state and federal government have given tremendous tax breaks over the years to the richest in our society. I think it's time that we look to the rich to bear a fair burden on their shoulders. They are much more capable than a lot of the folks who are going to suffer budget cuts otherwise. I would be happy to answer any questions.